

# DAILY BULLETIN

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## FOREIGN AID MUST FOSTER DEMOCRATIC PROGRESS, U.S. OFFICIAL SAYS

United States can play vital role in Muslim world, State's Tobias adds

By Ralph Dannheisser  
Washington File Special Correspondent

Washington -- An effective foreign assistance program must go beyond charity and help equip the people and leaders of recipient countries to achieve a democratic transformation, the new head of U.S. foreign assistance programs says.

Although the United States "can and must play a vital and catalytic role" in promoting democracy, Randall Tobias said May 5, "the ultimate responsibility for achieving this transformation rests with the leadership and citizens of developing nations themselves."

Tobias was sworn in March 31 as the nation's first director of foreign assistance, serving concurrently as administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the principal government agency administering economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide. He outlined his views on the goals of U.S. assistance programs in a keynote speech at the annual conference of the Center for the Study of Islam

The full texts of the U.S. presentation to the Committee Against Torture and background materials are available on the U.S. Mission website: <http://geneva.usmission.gov/>

and Democracy (CSID), a Washington-based nonprofit organization.

Tobias said his charge in his new post involves “strategically linking how we deliver foreign assistance to what we seek to accomplish in foreign policy.”

He said, “The overarching objectives for U.S. foreign assistance will focus our resources on our intent to achieve peace and security; improve governance and democratic participation; promote investments in people; and engender economic growth.”

Tobias said that meeting these goals is “nowhere ... more important than in the Muslim world today -- where the United States can play a vital role in helping people in nascent democracies build a free and prosperous future for themselves.”

He stressed that in the Muslim world, as elsewhere, “all of our assistance must be delivered in ways that make clear to those we seek to assist that our efforts are rooted in partnership, and not in paternalism.”

The aid official said that promoting freedom, democracy and development is a key part of the United States’ national security strategy because it addresses the root causes of terrorism.

“Governments that rule justly, encourage economic freedom and opportunity, and invest in their people -- the hallmarks of democracies -- do not produce or tolerate terrorists,” Tobias said. “People who see a hopeful future for themselves and their families are not willing to bind bombs to their bodies,” he added.

Tobias said, “When hate mongers like Osama bin Laden tell Muslims to reject assistance from the West, we know that it is in part because he understands that foreign assistance promotes partnership and understanding.”

Tobias said USAID has missions in 27 of the world’s 49 predominantly Muslim countries, and the majority of USAID funding for two of the past three years -- even excluding assistance to Iraq -- went to those countries.

Underlining the importance he places on the Muslim world, Tobias said that his first official trip in his new capacity would be to three Muslim countries -- Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq.

“I will see firsthand how we can work better in partnership and how we can better leverage resources on the ground to support both the citizens of the Muslim world and the committed Americans working with them in their valiant efforts,” he said.

Tobias said that all people, regardless of ethnicity, religion or geography, share the same basic desire to live in peace and provide for themselves and their families.

“With a renewed focus on sustainability and supporting Muslim countries in their own vision of democracy -- a vision that builds on a proud history stretching back thousands of years -- our foreign assistance can and will strengthen democracy and improve understanding with the Muslim world,” he said.

## DEMOCRACY IN THE ARAB WORLD

In opening the conference, CSID President Radwan Masmoudi cited what he called encouraging signs that “democracy is coming to the Arab and Muslim world.” Existing repressive regimes “are too weak, too discredited, and too corrupt to last much longer,” he said.

“The only question,” Masmoudi said, “is whether we as Americans and as free people of the world will support the aspirations for freedom, democracy and dignity ... or will go back to supporting Arab dictators and doing business as usual with corrupt and unpopular regimes,” as too often has been the case in the past.

“Let us be clear that promoting democracy is not easy, and certainly has risks associated with it,” but the inevitable outcome of not doing so is “more oppression, more poverty, more despair, more anger and frustration, and a rising anti-American and even extremist tide that will be very dangerous for the region and for the world,” Masmoudi said.

Another conference speaker, Carl Gershman, president of the National Endowment for Democracy, introduced a note of concern about what he termed “a general push-back that is taking place against democracy promotion in the Middle East and elsewhere.”

He urged democracy advocates worldwide to provide “political support and solidarity” for dissidents who are being jailed and harassed in an apparent effort to discourage others from joining their calls for democratic reforms.

CSID honored Saadeddine El Othmani, secretary-general of Morocco's Party of Justice and Democracy (PJD), with its "Muslim Democrat of the Year" award. Described by CSID as the leading moderate Islamic party in Morocco, PJD is the first opposition party in that nation's parliament. CSID said Othmani, trained as a psychiatrist, has published articles and essays on democracy and Islam, political participation, principles of dialogue, and empowerment of women.

For more information on U.S. aid policies and programs, see Global Development and Foreign Aid:  
[http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic\\_issues/global\\_development.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/economic_issues/global_development.html)

#### DARFUR HAS CHANCE TO "BEGIN ANEW," BUT SITUATION "REMAINS DIRE"

President Bush speaks out on Darfur, Rice to address U.N. Security Council

By Charles W. Corey  
 Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- With the recent peace agreement signed in Abuja, Nigeria, Sudan's Darfur region has the chance to "begin anew" but the situation there remains "dire," President Bush warned May 8, as he outlined new emergency food shipments and other steps his administration is taking to help those still suffering in Darfur.

Bush spoke to reporters on Darfur at the White House flanked by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick, who just had returned from Abuja. Bush said Rice will address the U.N. Security Council at a May 9 ministerial-level meeting to discuss humanitarian and security issues in Darfur and will submit a resolution that would accelerate the deployment of U.N. peacekeepers to Darfur.

The United States has circulated a draft resolution that would accelerate planning and assistance for both the transition period from the African Union force (AMIS) to a much larger and robust U.N. peacekeeping mission and the U.N. mission itself. The resolution also calls for expanding the mandate of the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to support the implementation of the new peace agreement.

In New York, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton told reporters May 8 the United States sees the resolution as "a critical step to accelerate the transition to the U.N. peacekeeping force, given that the African Union Mission in Sudan force has basically reached its limit."

"We want the deployment of the U.N. peacekeeping force as soon as possible," the ambassador said.

The United States praised the Darfur Peace Agreement, signed May 5 in Abuja, between the government of Sudan and the principal rebel group, the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), as a vital step in ending the suffering of the people of Darfur and providing an opportunity for national peace and reconciliation. The accord provides for detailed, verifiable steps to disarm and neutralize the Jingawit and other armed militia groups, and opens the way for economic recovery and integration of the former combatants and people of Darfur into the political process.

#### BUSH ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL FOOD AID FOR DARFUR

President Bush also announced new emergency U.S. food shipments to Darfur and said he has asked Congress to approve \$225 million in emergency funding for food aid. "I hope Congress will act swiftly on this true emergency," he said, in which some 200,000 have died from conflict, famine and disease and more than 2 million have been displaced.

The United States and other nations, Bush said, must act to prevent a humanitarian emergency and then help rebuild the Darfur region. The United States, he said, is the leading provider of humanitarian aid to Sudan and this year alone provides more than 85 percent of the food distributed by the World Food Program there. Despite this aid however, he warned the situation "remains dire."

The World Food Program has issued an appeal for funds necessary to feed 6 million people over the next several months, he told reporters. While the United States has met its commitment, he lamented that other major donors have not yet come through. As a result, the World Food Program has been forced to cut rations by half, he said. To get food to Darfur quickly, Bush said he has directed that five ships be loaded with food and proceed immediately to Port Sudan, and he ordered the emergency

purchase of another 40,000 metric tons of food for rapid shipment.

“These actions will allow the World Food Program to restore full food rations to the people of Darfur this summer,” he said.

Bush called on the international donor community to do its part. “Moving forward, we cannot keep people healthy and fed without other countries standing up and doing their part as well. The European Union, nations like Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Japan, have taken leadership on other humanitarian issues and the people of Darfur urgently need more of their help now.”

The president called on the government of Sudan to allow all U.N. agencies to do their work “without hindrance ... [and] remove the visa and travel restrictions that complicate relief efforts. And all sides must cease attacks on relief workers.”

Bush pledged the United States will be an “active participant” in an “important” Dutch-led reconstruction and development conference that will take place in the next few months to help the people of Darfur.

#### INCREASING SECURITY IN DARFUR

The United States and other countries must work to help increase security levels on the ground in Darfur, Bush said.

“In the short term,” he said, “the African Union forces in Darfur need better capabilities.” As such, he said, the United States is working with its NATO allies to get those forces the immediate assistance they need in the form of planning, logistics, intelligence support and other help. Bush urged all members of the alliance to contribute further to this effort.

In the longer term, Bush told reporters, the African Union forces must be the core of a larger military force that is more mobile and more capable, generates better intelligence and has been given a clear mandate to protect civilians from harm.

Bush said his administration is working with the United Nations to identify countries that can contribute troops so “the peacekeeping effort can be robust.”

The president said he had just called President Umar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir of Sudan “to commend him for his work on this agreement, and to urge the government to express clear support for a U.N. force. The people of Darfur deserve more than sympathy. They deserve the active protection that U.N. peacekeepers can provide.” Bush said Osama bin Laden, in a recent audiotape, attacked American efforts in Sudan and urged his followers to kill international peacekeepers in Darfur. “Once again, the terrorists are attempting to exploit the misery of fellow Muslims and encourage more death. Once again, America and other responsible nations are fighting misery and helping a desperate region come back to life. Once again, the contrast cannot be more clear,” the president said.

“America will not turn away from this tragedy. We will call genocide by its rightful name and we will stand up for the innocent until the peace of Darfur is secured,” he said.

For more information on the Sudan peace process, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency:  
<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html>

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#### UNITED STATES CONDEMNS CONTINUED REPRESSION IN CUBA

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State Department reiterates its support for dissidents denied freedom

Washington – The United States condemns the continued repression of Cuba’s dissidents by the regime of Cuban dictator Fidel Castro, and looks forward to a day when basic freedoms are enjoyed by all Cubans, according to the U.S. State Department.

On May 8, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack condemned the Cuban government’s recent harassment of peaceful dissidents, including those individuals who were prevented from participating in an April 25 videoconference sponsored by the U.S. Interests Section in Havana.

In one case, a Cuban state agent entered the home of dissident leader Martha Beatriz Roque and attacked and injured her. In a related incident, dissident Elsa Morejon Almagro was shoved inside a taxi by two self-identified government security agents and forced to return home.

Those dissidents who did participate in the videoconference also were subjected to harassment. Felix Bonne was confronted by a government-sponsored mob when he returned home from the event. The mob threatened to drag him through the streets if he continued his peaceful activities.

In an April interview with the Washington File, one State Department official voiced objections to the Castro regime's repression.

"The U.S. government deplores these thuggish tactics aimed at preventing Cuban citizens from exercising the basic rights enjoyed by people in democratic nations throughout the world," the official said. "The United States looks forward to the day when freedom of thought, expression, and movement are enjoyed by all Cubans."

On May 8, McCormack reiterated U.S. support for Cuba's dissidents, including those victims of the Castro regime's crackdown on 75 dissidents in the spring of 2003.

"As we mark some of the grim milestones of the Cuban regime, including the third anniversary of the 'Black Spring' crackdown, and the 12th year in jail for political prisoner Francisco Chaviano, the United States reiterates its support for these brave individuals and all those in Cuba who are being deprived of the freedom they desire and deserve," McCormack said.

#### ENERGY DEPARTMENT SIGNS WIND-TO-HYDROGEN RESEARCH AGREEMENT

Project will compare producing hydrogen from wind power, electric grid

Washington – The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and Xcel Energy, an electric power and natural gas utility, have signed a cooperative agreement for an innovative "wind to hydrogen" research, development and demonstration project.

Researchers will analyze and compare hydrogen production from wind power and the electric grid, according to a May 8 DOE press release.

The hydrogen will be produced through electrolysis – the process of using electricity to split water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen atoms. NREL is DOE's primary national laboratory for renewable energy and energy-efficiency research and development.

"One unique feature of this system is the direct connection between the wind turbine and the electrolyzer, which will make the system more efficient," said Ben Kroposki, senior engineer at NREL's Center for Electric and Hydrogen Technologies and Systems.

The agreement supports the President Bush's Hydrogen Fuel Initiative, which seeks to develop the hydrogen, fuel cell and infrastructure technologies needed to make it practical and cost-effective to use fuel cell vehicles by 2020.

The new wind-electrolysis system will be at NREL's National Wind Technology Center, where hydrogen will be produced, compressed and stored to be used as a vehicle fuel or to generate electricity.

The project will compare electrolyzer technologies and researchers will examine issues related to system efficiency, integration, compression, storage, cost and the use of a mixture of hydrogen and natural gas.

This partnership combines NREL's expertise in renewable energy and hydrogen with Xcel Energy's expertise in energy conversion, transmission, distribution and use. Minneapolis-based Xcel Energy plans to add 1,200 megawatts of wind energy capacity in Colorado, Minnesota and Texas by the end of 2007.

Xcel Energy will invest more than \$1.25 million in the project; NREL and DOE will invest about \$750,000.

For information on U.S. policy, see Energy Policy: [http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/energy\\_policy.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/energy_policy.html)

**Plases Note:** Most texts and transcript mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage: <http://geneva.usmission.gov/>

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